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"HE DECLARED PARTICULARLY WHAT THINGS GOD HAD WROUGHT AMONG THE
GENTILES. AND WHEN THEY HEARD IT, THEY GLORIFIED THE LORD."—*Acts* xxi. 19, 20.

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A CONTROVERSY WITH MOHAMMEDANS.

BY H. MARTYN CLARK, M.D.



LEVEN miles almost due east of Amritsar, by the side of the grand trunk road from Peshawur to Calcutta, we come to the ancient city of Jandiala. One of the very few strongholds of the Jains in the Punjab, the preponderating element in society is distinctly and bigotedly Jaina and Hindu. The Mohammedans of the place are, as a whole, poor, uneducated, and low in the social scale. Nevertheless, amongst them a teacher of an extremely elementary written character, yeleft "lundé," in which Hindus keep their books, and a beardless youth of about seventeen, who had been for some time an inquirer, and even a candidate for baptism, were so impressed with the manifold activities of the Christians that they were impelled to do battle for the faith of Islam. So the Panda (as the teacher aforesaid is termed) and the youth (his ally) girded on the armour of jibes and sneers, misrepresentation and abuse, and did valiantly for Mohammed, as they thought, by annoying the Christians on every hand and in every way. A great point was periodically to ask Rs. 200 or so from the Christians, on the plea that they were commanded to give to those that asked of them. For a while their puerilities were unheeded, but to such lengths did they go that at last it was felt we really must take some notice of them; and, after due consultation, it was thought that the best way of silencing them—and, what was more important, doing a real piece of good work besides—would be to hold a public disputation on the points at issue between Christians and Mohammedans. After full discussion of the matter with the Church at Jandiala, and on their behalf, I sent a letter to the Panda, in which I invited him to arrange for a public assembly for discussion of his religion and ours. The challenge set forth the facts of the case—that, of late, the Mohammedans of Jandiala had shown a great desire to dispute with Christians; that, while they had much to ask us, there were many things in Islam concerning which we, too, wished to inquire, and the best way would be to have a discussion, and so settle our differences; and the challenge went on to say, "Inasmuch as thou art deemed a valiant man amongst the Mohammedans of Jandiala, come, thou, into the field, or choose thee a champion from wherever thou wilt from the number of the learned of thy faith, and commit him unto thy cause." We pointed out that the spirit of the discussion should be, at all costs, to ascertain the truth of God, so that we might follow it for our souls' good. The challenge concluded thus, in true Oriental style: "And if neither thou nor thy co-religionists can venture to meet us to the face, then do ye cease, wherever ye shall meet with Christians proclaiming the Gospel, from vain babblings and foolish objections, and be careful no more to 'trot the horse of conversation in the fields of talk.'"

The gauntlet thrown down produced the greatest consternation. The Mohammedans were aghast. What could they do?—and yet something must be done. They addressed themselves to various Societies for the Aid of Islam, and bestirred themselves to find a champion, but none appeared. Three weeks went by, the wager of battle still lay unaccepted. Jandiala Mohammedans were in dire straits, when, to their intense relief, they found a defender in a certain Mirza Ghulam Ahmed of Qadian. This man is a somewhat remarkable personage, and one of great interest to the missionary, for he is one of the signs of the times in India. As the sprouting fungus shows the decaying stem, so do he and his like show the steady decadence of the tree of Islam. Mohammedanism in India is no longer what it was; an immense change is being brought about. It can no longer withstand the assaults of

its assailants on the old base. This is a heaving, stirring age in matters spiritual, and the changes wrought by it are very marked in Islam in India. A noteworthy thing is that the old orthodox Mohammedanism is now receiving its deepest wounds at the hands of Mohammedans so called. They desire to adapt it to present circumstances, forgetting that to adapt is to destroy.

Ghulam Ahmed is of Moghul descent. For years he was a Government servant. He has now set up as a religious leader, nay, as a prophet; and, as far as worldly gear goes, he has made it a profitable calling. He is deeply imbued with the rationalistic principles of Sir Syud Ahmed of Aligarh. The Mohammedan world lies in darkness, according to Ghulam Ahmed, and to him alone is now divine inspiration and illumination granted, that he may know what the hidden meaning of the Quran is. He is the prophet Ahmed, who was to come. All this is, of course, rank heresy from the Mohammedan point of view, even as it is nonsense from that of the Christian; but his greatest heresy is that, contrary to all Mohammedan teaching, he denies the miraculous birth of our Lord, and affirms that He died—nay, that he himself has in him the Spirit of Christ, and is the Christ who, according to Mohammedans, is to come again to establish Islam upon the earth. A very curious and extremely interesting personage is Ghulam Ahmed, in the light of contemporary Mohammedanism. He has his followers and his foes. Islam is fiercely divided concerning him. For his blasphemies and heresies he has been excommunicated from the community of the orthodox, and one of the most curious books of the kind is the collection of deliverances of some seven hundred of the leading moulvies of India on this heretic and his heresies. They call him "Sitan—the man of sin—yea, the uncle of the man of sin (Dajjal)—infidel," and so forth, and the unanimous deliverance is: "He is cut off from the faithful; eat not with him, say not prayers with him, assist not at his funeral, and wish him not peace, and may God grant him 'a black face through eternity.'"

Such was the Mohammedan champion. Mohammedans, as a whole, were full of glee. Though a heretic as regards Islam, they held he was perfectly sound in his attitude towards Christianity, and they frankly said: "We have no one his equal for language and eloquence. However much he may differ from us on points of our own faith, he will nobly represent us against Christianity." The general opinion was that we had not a chance against the Mirza, that the result was a foregone conclusion, and the glory which would accrue to Islam would be all the brighter for the hopeless disaster which was to befall the Christian cause.

The next thing was that fourteen disciples of the Mirza, almost all men of education and position, came to me as an embassy from their master. It was a unique experience. We spent some hours together, and framed the rules of debate and adjusted the preliminaries. The controversy was to last two weeks. During the first week the Mohammedans were to have their say, and they chose as their points of attack the Divinity of our Lord and the superiority of the Quran to the Bible. In the following week Christians were to have their innings. We stated our position in the following points:—(1) Unless there be an Atonement for Sin, how can God be just and the Justifier of sinners? (2) Fatalism; (3) Warring for the faith; (4) What proof is there that Mohammed is a prophet of God? and (5) that the Quran is the Word of God?

We chose as our champion Mr. Abdullah Athim, who is amongst the earliest of living converts from Mohammedanism, with whom Mohammedan controversy is a life's study, and who, after many years of honourable service as an Extra Assistant Commissioner under Government, has now retired, and is spending the evening of his days in Amritsar, where he is an honorary worker in connexion with the C.M.S. The choice of place was left to me.

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In the weeks that followed the adjustment of preliminaries and the beginning of the controversy, the subject excited the most extraordinary interest near and far. It was in the air everywhere. In railway carriages, by the well, on highways and byeways, in the quiet village and the crowded town, it was the one absorbing theme of conversation. Gradually it dawned on us that, all unknown, the projected one-day talk at Jandiala had developed into something much more far-reaching and important than we had imagined possible.

In this interval I wrote to the Mirza, and called his attention to the excommunications fulminated against him, and pointed out that with his own private opinions we should have nothing to do; if he came, we should argue with him as a Mohammedan, and on strictly orthodox Mohammedan acceptations of doctrine and life. He replied that he would appear as a Mohammedan, and would confine himself to the ordinary Mohammedan standards as usually accepted.

It was decided that the discussion should be held in Amritsar, and the verandah of my house was judged to be the most suitable place. Admission was by ticket. On the day appointed the verandah was filled in no time by lucky ticket-holders, while the police turned away hundreds not so provided at the compound-gate. For some time a surging mob filled the road in front, very quiet, orderly, and intensely anxious to get in. It was at once evident that the Mohammedans attached immense importance to the controversy.

Each champion was allowed three helpers. The Mirza had as his a moulvie, one of his followers, from Bhopal, another from Behra, and for the third a noted opponent of Christians was fetched all the way from Ludhiana to find out the Scripture texts quoted pro and con, at which he proved himself an expert. Mr. Athim chose as his helpers the Rev. G. L. Thakur Dass, of the American United Presbyterian Mission at Gujranwala (only present part of the time); the Rev. Mr. Abdullah, of the American Presbyterian Mission; and the Rev. Thomas Howell, of the C.M.S., Clarkabad. As helpers from time to time we had the Rev. Ihsan Ullah, C.M.S., Narowal; the Rev. Fattah Muhammud, C.M.S., Fathgarh; and Dr. Mayut Ullah Nasir. The management was in the hands of Mr. F. Lahiz, eldest son of the Rev. Moulvie Imad-uddin. Two converts from the Methodist Episcopal Mission at Bareilly were noticeable, and one of them, by name Jowala Singh, a Native of our own Amritsar district, converted and baptized at Bareilly, did yeoman service as amanuensis.

The disputants sat facing each other in the middle of the verandah, behind them sat their helpers, and then their friends. The Mirza's disciples came from many different places; a number came daily by train from Lahore, Jullundur, and Batala; others had come from Peshawur, on the one hand, and various parts of the N.-W. Provinces on the other. On the Christian side was a goodly array of converts from Mohammedanism, and it was very delightful to see the keen interest and practical help and steady endurance of the younger members of our Punjab Church. Their sound good sense, as well as zeal, augurs brightly for the future.

In addition to the disciples of the Mirza, there was a very large attendance of orthodox Mohammedans, men mostly of affluence and position, and, as such, not usually reached by existing methods of work. Herein lay one delightful feature of the controversy. There they were, influential wealthy men, Government servants and what not—men, as a whole, quite beyond ordinary reach—sitting hour after hour for a couple of weeks, listening most attentively to expositions of Scripture, to the claims of Christ, to the eternal verities of His truth and the falsity of all beside for acceptance with God, salvation, and

life eternal. Had the controversy achieved nothing else, this in itself would have been a great gain.

Another unique feature was that the attack on Islam and the exposition of the truths of Christ were, for the first time in such a discussion, almost exclusively carried out by members of the Punjab Church. Indigenous Christians fought the battle, and this was keenly felt by the Mohammedans. As one of them said, "A cartload of axe-heads was sent to a forest, and the forest said, 'What care I?' But later on it knew it was doomed, when its own branches were lopped off and fitted as hafts to the axe-heads. We are troubled this day because to your axe-heads the branches from our own tree have been fitted."

I was appointed chairman on behalf of the Christians; my Mohammedan *confère* was the vice-president of the municipality of Sialkot. Two writers on each side took down a verbatim report of the speeches. Exactly at the time appointed the Mirza and his friends were ready, and so the *Jang-i-Mugaidas*, or Holy War, as we had agreed to term the controversy, began. After two starts, ruled out of order, the Mirza at last fairly got under weigh. He opened with an attack on the Incarnation, which he developed in successive days, taking care to include the Atonement, the Divinity, Miracles, Life, and Death of our Lord. He was careful, also, the while, to work in the beauties of the Quran and its immeasurable superiority to the Christian Scriptures. He showed considerable dialectic skill; the attack was fierce and cunning, but it was soon evident that though he had a good command of language, he had little else. We saw that he had been greatly overrated, for his knowledge of Christianity was as elementary as his overweening self-conceit was extraordinary. He was shallow all through. Despite specious sophistries, he by no means made the best of his case. Old objections a thousand times refuted were brought up, and occasionally he was so hard put to it that he talked sheer nonsense; as, for instance, when he insisted that deceit was taught as a Christian duty in the Scriptures because the Apostle Paul had himself said he became all things to all men, if haply he might win some! Of course we had, "Why callest thou Me good?" adduced against the Divinity of our Lord, but the thing on which the Mirza rested this portion of his case was John x. 35. This is a novel argument in my experience of Mohammedans. The inference the Mirza drew was that here our Lord distinctly repudiated all claims to be Divine in any special sense, and only professed to be divine, as others had been before Him, in virtue of His message. The obvious reply was, that if the mere message of the Word of Life entrusted to men gave them such high honour, what should we say of Him who was no mere messenger, but the Word made flesh and abiding amongst men, while in Him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily? For close on two days the battle raged round this text.

I should say that in person the Mirza is of fair complexion, freckled, of middle height, with beard tinged red, in imitation of the beard of Mohammed; and that he has a pair of shifty little eyes, which can only be described as foxy. In the city of Amritsar I can lay my hands on half a dozen foemen fitter for one's steel than he. And he was thoroughly found out; so that while he came with a great prestige, he went away crestfallen.

When our turn came, I must candidly confess our champion did not make the best of our case against Mohammedanism. Despite much advice, or, perhaps, because of it, Mr. Athim, who is a man of philosophical mind, pursued a course of his own not readily appreciated by more ordinary intellects. He dived into deep things and first principles, and passed by the obvious and effective points of attack. It was magnificent, but it was scarcely the type of war required. In the end it was all good—good beyond what we

had expected—yet there was not one of us, perhaps, who did not feel that the good might have been better.

Details of the discussion are not necessary here. The interest constantly increased. The same Mohammedans sat day by day, listening with absorbing attention. The fortune of debate varied daily, but the result steadily shaped itself. Bit by bit objections were met, arguments silenced, the claims of our Lord pressed home; and at the close of the first week the victory was, as it ever must be, to our God and His Christ.

On the final day of this portion of the debate Mr. Athim fell ill, and so the meeting was adjourned; and as he was still incapacitated when we met again, I had to take his place. That day, at eleven o'clock—the hour of closing—drew on, the poor Mirza became so embarrassed that he withdrew from the meeting and performed incantations over water to secure the confusion of my tongue. A great change came over the Mohammedans. They had never doubted that the Christians would be crushed, and that right soon. The result astonished them; boastfulness vanished, and they sat thoughtful and anxious. They had a strong case in attack, and had made nothing of it; they knew how weak their defensive was, and dreaded the attack.

Next week, feeble though our attack on Mohammedanism was, it was quite enough for them. "Oh! that the controversy would end!" seemed to be the cry of their hearts; so anxious were they to close, that they would not hear of extension by another day. During the last hour forty of them sat apart by the wall reading the Quran in parts and offering up prayers for victory, which, by the way, the Mirza did not claim, so upset was he. This slip he remedied in his own fashion; four hours after all was over he had a special revelation to assure him the victory was his. A pretty victory, truly, as people largely observed, which required a special message from heaven to point it out. He left us with a parting prophecy that as surely as he was in the right, Mr. Athim would within fifteen months be plunged into the deepest hell; which prophecy, I may add, has completed the confusion and disgust of all right-thinking Mohammedans.

The discussion closed in unique fashion. A leading Mohammedan gentleman of Amritsar moved a vote of thanks to me for organising the controversy. This was cordially agreed to, and after much mutual hand-shaking and protestations of friendship the audience dispersed.

Some months have now passed, and we are able, in measure, to make a fair estimate of what has been done. There is reason for the greatest thankfulness and praise. We have gained much and lost nothing. The Word of God has been fully preached, and day after day a really remarkable audience has had pressed home on it, in one way and another, that there is none other name than that of Christ given under heaven whereby men may be saved; and the message has had a most respectful hearing. By means of this controversy the message has gone far and wide. An enterprising Mohammedan publisher in Amritsar issued the verbatim reports daily, and it was a sight to see how the papers were bought up. The street in which the press is situated was a mass of heads, waiting for the daily issue. The first edition went like wildfire; a second has now also been exhausted. All over the country these papers have gone, full of the truth of Christ, and so the Gospel has reached many an otherwise difficult nook. The Mohammedans are further astonished and depressed. Let one example suffice for the many. In Ajnala there is a Syud, a noted opponent of Christianity in his part of the country. When he heard of the controversy he was jubilant. "God has delivered them into our hands; the jackals (i.e. Christians) are venturing out of their holes; now shall we destroy them." He had all the reports sent him as soon as they

came out. As day after day went by, he became more and more silent and depressed; and when he read the last paper he flung it down and said of the Mirza, "Fool! fool!" He has had none of his old opposition left in him since.

Another notable gain is that a great impetus has been given to inquiry. Discussions have sprung up on every side like mushrooms. For some time, never a week passed without challenges being sent me. Men are questioning, thinking, inquiring; almost daily proofs kept coming to hand of the effect the discussion had had in this way. In my own experience, men who never thought of these things before are thinking now. Cheering testimony comes to hand from the Rev. W. Thwaites, C.M.S., Peshawur. He tells us that the controversy has excited very keen interest in that city, and as a result, in measure, of it, a remarkable change has occurred; the old deadness and indifference has been replaced by fierce opposition. Instead of being severely let alone, he and his workers now find themselves surrounded by masses of keenly hostile people. The numbers vary, not so the opposition. Sometimes they are pelted as they preach with shreds of melons and so forth, and usually they are called "pig" and "devil," whereat they greatly rejoice.

Then again, the fruits of the Spirit of Christ in His followers have been abundantly manifested, and the Mohammedans present have realised and admitted the difference between us and them. They fought for victory; we, as we told them, had no thought of either victory or defeat: our one desire was that the glory of God should be made evident. Mr. Athim's words have been good, but better far have been his unfailing Christian humility, patience, gentleness, and forbearance. His practical Christianity produced a grand impression. On one occasion, after an irritating and insulting piece of bluster on the Mirza's part, Mr. Athim's kindly Christian dignity and meekness won all hearts. "*Allah ho Allah* (God He is God). Wonderful people are you Christians. Had this been a discussion between Mohammedans, long ere now we should have been tearing each other's throats. You invite us to your house, arrange for our comfort, and, with unfailing courtesy, listen to all we have to say against your faith! Wonderful!" was what was said to me in effect over and over again. Said another Mohammedan: "I never enjoyed a controversy so much. After all, God alone knows His own truth best. But you Christians are men." The Mirza himself, in a speech delivered to some of his admirers after the controversy was over, gave us high praise: "They honoured me, and were never wroth, even when my words were irritating. It is the only discussion I have had in which I have not been insulted." In good sooth he may well say so. He has not been happy in his experiences of discussions with his co-religionists. He has had a number, and there has been a sort of sameness about them all. Chased out of one mosque, and in dire straits how to save life and limb; assaulted in another; mobbed in a third; almost always under police protection—our Holy War struck him as a pleasant contrast, and one which has had its effect far and wide. It has, I think, been realised that Christians seek truth and are not afraid of it, and are willing to hear it at all costs. A great moral result and victory this.

Last but not least, we who have been engaged in the controversy have obtained experience and definite blessing. The early prayer-meeting every day was a time of refreshing to us. The hearts of our younger Christians have been established in the faith and greatly comforted. They have learned that Christians have no cause for fear, despite anything the enemies of Christ can do, for the foundation of God standeth sure. They have looked their opponents fairly in the face, have heard all they had to say; they are the stronger this day for it all, and have their feet in a larger room. A bright young

Mohammedan lad, a candidate for baptism, was one of the audience. He had been waiting for baptism for some time when the controversy was arranged. He sat through it all, and at the close was more desirous of baptism than before. "It is good. I heard beforehand all they could say. I believe more intelligently than formerly that Christ is my Lord." He has been baptized, and so far we have had nothing but joy in him.

The Mirza will not be in a hurry to be again the champion of Islam against Christians. As for the Mohammedans of Jandiala who set the ball a-rolling, they are completely disorganised, and have quite effaced themselves as regards further controversy. The horse of talk gallops no more in the fields of conversation, but instead, in one quarter, as I learn, there are signs of hopeful inquiry.

During the first portion of the discussion a somewhat amusing incident occurred. As a proof of the divine nature of Mohammedanism and the Quran, the Mirza offered to work miracles. He challenged us, if we were indeed followers of the truth, to do no less. "Let God decide the controversy between us," said he, "by a manifestation of His power through whichever of us is indeed a follower of His truth." This raised the question of miracles. The Mirza's sophistries were answered at every point, and the teaching of the Old Testament and the commands and cautions of our Lord concerning false prophets and lying signs and wonders were fully expounded. He was discomfited when we showed him that the truth of a doctrine now depended neither in miracle, nor sign, nor wonder, but on its conformity to the revealed will of God; so that even an angel from heaven was to be held accused were he to preach any other Gospel than that given by God. The statement which seemed to have most weight with the Mohammedans was that if the Mirza was correct in his contention, the sorcerers before Pharaoh, up to a certain point, were to be looked upon as as much accredited messengers of God as was Moses. The Mirza, however, referred so often and in so many ways to the miracles he was prepared to do, that at last we thought it would be well to answer the fool according to his folly. We found a man whose leg had been amputated, another who is dumb, and one who is totally blind. These three were kept in reserve, and at the proper time produced in the assembly. We said, "Mirza Sahib, if you really care to perform a miracle, we have no objection to witness it. Cure whichever of these afflicted beings you like—or cure them all. Or tell us what sort of a case you want and we will get it for you"—in fact, we made him welcome to the whole resources of the Amritsar Medical Mission in this particular, and the more so that the controversy was organised and carried on in connexion with this special work. The whole scene was dramatic in the extreme, and the effect indescribable in the assembly and in the city, where the news of the Christian's reply to the Mirza's offers, and his lamentable failure, rapidly spread. The Mirza, though ashamed and confounded, made a gallant fight. He retorted by telling us to cure them ourselves, in conformity with Mark xvi. 17-18; but the three incurables continually present were too much for him. He could not rally, and at the close he and his followers went off much depressed to the city, where he soon found his prestige very seriously impaired.

Another incident which took place during the days of the discussion was of such extreme interest that, though in no way connected with it, I cannot refrain from giving a brief sketch of it. The Mirza is a heretic. The vast majority of Mohammedans are ranked against him. Though he has made great stir, his actual followers are extremely few, nevertheless the dispute between them (or rather the Mirza) and the orthodox has been long and exceedingly acrimonious. Things have come to such a pass that both parties

finally resolved to resort to a *mubahilla*. In this each party states its position, commends its cause to God, appeals to Him as against its adversary, and prays that the most withering curses may blast whichever of the parties is in the wrong. It is this imprecation of Divine vengeance which is more particularly technically termed *mubahilla*. This extraordinary ceremony, though well known, has, it is said, been but once practised in the whole history of Islam. That was by Mohammed himself, who on a certain occasion resorted to it as the final appeal between himself and certain of the Jewish unbelievers in his prophetic claims. Now were we to see in Amritsar a thing unknown since the early days of Islam? The representative of the orthodox against the Mirza is an Afghan moulvie from the city of Ghazni. Preliminaries had been settled and the date fixed some time beforehand, and when it was seen that the date fell during the controversy, the Ghaznavi moulvie at once wrote to delay the *mubahilla*. "Heretic though thou be," wrote he to the Mirza, "thou art fighting the battles of the Lord against the enemies of Islam and of our holy prophet, on whom be the peace of God, and I would not do aught to weaken or distress thee in the fight." The Mirza, however, elected to abide by the arrangements made, so on a certain afternoon, having finished the morning's discussion with us, he prepared for his other opponents. The Mohammedan population of Amritsar, and of many another place, was in wild ferment. Outside the city there is a huge enclosure, where prayers are offered up on the festival of the *Eed* at the close of the month of fasting. This *Eedgah*, as it is termed, which is capable of holding many thousands of people, was the rendezvous. Thither I went at the time appointed, in company with the Rev. Thomas Howell and the Rev. Ihsan Ullah. A vast concourse had assembled, and yet a steady stream of people kept pouring out of the city gate and down the road into the *Eedgah*. It was an extraordinary crowd. Every sort, shape, size, and type of Mohammedan was there; and except ourselves and a superintendent of police, the crowd was Mohammedan to a man. Very gay it looked in every colour and shape of turban and garment; but there the gaiety ended. Though the people talked freely, a solemn, thoughtful look was over them all. The interest centred itself round the top of the *Eedgah*: here the Mirza and the Ghaznavi Moulvie, each with about forty followers, sat on opposite sides, solemn, silent, sad. As we moved about, we had many a conversation concerning the ceremony about to take place, and overheard many another. Some time was spent in mediation, but as the Mirza was obdurate, and would retract nothing of his heterodoxy, the *mubahilla* commenced. After solemn prayer and a sermon the parties were ready. One last effort at pacification was made; it failed, and the two factions sat glaring at each other. A great silence fell on that vast assemblage, though from the hatred and passion evident on their faces one could realise something of the volcano pent up within, and could quite understand that the Mirza's best friends at that moment were to be found in the strong body of police posted about the *Eedgah*. Then at the command of one of the honorary magistrates of Amritsar, a Mohammedan, the parties approached each other. The Ghazni Moulvie delivered a solemn form of imprecation to the magistrate, who handed it to the Mirza. He looked it over, then read it out in a loud voice: "I follow the truth, but, O God, if I am a liar, infidel, faithless, as this man avers, may I—" and then followed a series of imprecations and curses, too horrible to transcribe. As the Mirza read out the curses, a heartrending wail burst from his friends; they covered their faces and sobbed aloud. It was a weird sight, this company of forty strong men, under agony of grief, while the rest of that great congregation stood by, every nerve strained to the utmost. Three

times the Mirza read the appeal to heaven, while his friends wept and wailed. The paper was then handed back by the magistrate to the Ghazni Moulvie, who read: "I follow the truth. This man, Ghulam Ahmed, of Qadian, is an enemy of the truth of God, a liar, deceiver, faithless: let Thy curses be on him, and if I be wrong then may I—"and he repeated the imprecations and curses which the Mirza had read, making the necessary changes. His friends did not weep. He read the declaration three times, and at the close of each time the people shouted "Amen," as they had also done in the case of the Mirza. The parties then resumed their original places, and the *mubahilla* entered on its last stage. The rival factions gave themselves up to "prayer," which consisted of the most horrible imprecations on each other. I was standing by the Ghaznavis; I heard them pray with almost incredible intensity of feeling: "Lord, may this man not go hence. Change him into a bear, and a monkey. Blacken his face, destroy him, destroy him. May that happen to him which in Thy most terrible wrath has never yet happened to the vilest of sinners"—and so on. The Mirza and his friends were meanwhile not idle; they in turn continued to bann the Ghaznavis root and branch. The scene was intensely interesting, yet withal most painful. It was a striking exemplification of the spirit of Islam, and in keeping with the practice of its apostle.

Herein lies a great difference between Christianity and Islam. Every crime committed in the history of Mohammedanism has had its counterpart in that of Christianity. What is there that Mohammedans have done which Christians, so called, have not done, and sometimes so done as to outdo Mohammedans? But the greatest protest against the evil deeds of professing Christianity is the life of Christ. The precepts and example of the Son of God form the standard to which every reformer can appeal. The greatest justification, on the other hand, a Mohammedan has for his sins is the life and the teaching of Mohammed. Polygamy, slavery, whatever it be, is inculcated by the "prophet" alike by precept and practice. To attempt any reform is directly to attack the character of the prophet himself, and that is why the hope of mankind lies, not in the reform of Islam, but in the total extirpation of that sore cancer which afflicts humanity. No religion can rise higher than its fountain-head; that is why Mohammedanism is but a reflex of the rude virtues and crude vices of Mohammed, and is an evil, and must always be an evil. The Mohammedans cursed each other, and why should they not? We thought of the bull *In Cœna Domini* of the Papists, and the curses so-called Christians have bestowed on each other, and of Him who has said, "Bless, and curse not."

The cursing lasted about an hour. As we walked about we heard endless conversations. The actual parties to the *mubahilla* were the two champions and their immediate friends. It was evident, from what one heard, that the people present were mainly the orthodox. Here are samples of the conversations:—

"Sly dog, that Mirza? did you see how well he arranged things for effect? Wasn't it ridiculous to see how his friends pretended to weep?"

Another group: "Ah! was it not heartrending to see the tears trickling between the fingers of the Mirza's friends?"

"*Allah ho Akbar*—God is great; now the heretic will get his deserts."

"No heretic, he; see how he is fighting the Christians," and so on.

While the cursings and conversations were in full force another moulvie mounted the pulpit and began to preach against the heresies of the Mirza. As I was wandering about in the crowd a Mohammedan touched my arm. He was a respectable man of about thirty-five. "I want to speak to you," said he. "Say on," was my answer. "You are a Christian, you are con-

ducting the controversy with the Mirza in the name of God; will you answer truly?" "I will." "What do you think of Mohammed and of the Quran?" "Neither are from God, nor is there any hope or help for man in them. In Christ alone is the salvation of sinners." He listened most attentively, then said, "As you will answer to God, in His name, hast thou answered truly, and from thy heart, with nothing of falsity or ulterior purpose—is this thing the truth of God?" "It is." He looked at me as if he would read my innermost soul, then said, "I wanted to know," and before I could realise that he was going he was lost in the crowd. He was no idle questioner, his face and manner were of one much in earnest, whatever his purpose might be.

The Mirza wanted to have a *nubahilla* with us, but we told him that while the children of darkness might curse each other, we followed the Prince of Peace, and we were commanded to bless and curse not. Our prayer for him and his friends was that they might obtain eternal life—that is, know the only true and wise God, and Jesus Christ His Son, whom He had sent.

It is interesting to add that, as a result of the controversy, the Rev. Moulvie Imaduddin has produced a book of a very remarkable character. It will produce a great sensation, and cannot fail to mark an epoch in Mohammedan controversy.

On the last day of the discussion, through the kindness of the Rev. T. R. Wade, I was enabled to offer books on Christianity and Mohammedanism to any who would read them. There was a large number of applicants, but the Mirza ordered his disciples to withdraw theirs, and cajoled the orthodox into doing the same. A number of copies have, however, since been privately obtained from us by some of the applicants.

Under the title of "The Holy War," we have published the controversy. The Mohammedan publication is better got up than ours, which has in it a number of typographical errors. Both publications consist of the verbatim reports of the speeches and daily minutes, and nothing else. Our version gives the Scripture passages referred to at length.

A number of our missionary brethren were definitely opposed to any such controversy as this. Some thought it would only lead to disorder, and stir up strife, while at least one other was distinctly of opinion that inasmuch as the Mirza claimed to be Christ, we should deal with him as with false Christs. To us in the Medical Mission it appeared that the man was of the number of those "whose mouths must be stopped;" and on taking a broad view of the field we were convinced that whatever we might think of him personally, in the interests of the cause in general, we could not afford to be neglectful of him. We felt further that whatever the results might be to the Mirza himself, through him we should have access to a very large audience. These anticipations have been realised beyond our expectations. There was nothing of disorder or strife. In India, if plans are carefully thought out and executed, there need never be. The labour has been very great, and what the mere physical strain has been will be understood by those who know the Punjab, when I say the meetings were held in May, in an open verandah, from 6—11 a.m., for a fortnight. Now that the controversy is over we see that we were rightly guided, and that it has been well worth all the effort. The pecuniary expense could not fail to be considerable, and I heartily thank the friends at home who through General Hutchinson, promptly and most generously enabled us to meet all charges.

We have by no means seen the last of the "Holy War." Its harvest has yet to be garnered, for assuredly God's seed will in God's time and in God's way be found unto God's harvest.